

# UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE UNION: UNIVERSITY OF READING

## LOCAL PAY AND EQUALITY CLAIM 2018/19

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The University of Reading UCU branch note three major issues that actively undermine the principle of equal pay at the University; addressing these form the basis of this local pay claim:

- 1) The University of Reading has a **gender pay gap** of 19.6%.
- 2) There are a significant number of staff employed on **precarious contracts of employment** (sessional and hourly-paid).
- 3) There are identifiable instances of “**grade-drift**” throughout the University.

Reading UCU have raised these issues over the last two years through the Joint Negotiating Committee without any satisfactory resolution. This contrasts strongly with the rapid pace of change over recent years to the University’s administrative and financial structures. Moreover, in its recent response to the Joint Higher Education Trade Union Pay Claim 2018/19, UCEA suggests with regard to casualisation of staff that Trade Unions use their “status as the recognised employee representative bodies in individual HEIs to raise any specific concerns they have regarding arrangements in that HEI.”<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, at its Annual General Meeting on 6 June 2018, UCU members at the University of Reading voted in favour of a motion that addressed the need for action to put structures and procedures in place to prevent pay erosion and address inequality amongst different groups of staff. Members instructed the University of Reading branch of UCU to work on these issues with the University as a matter of urgency. This formal claim has been created following consultation with members in relation to these issues.

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<sup>1</sup> UCUBAN/HE32, 15 May 2018: [https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/9387/National-Negotiators-Report/pdf/UCUBANHE32\\_National\\_negotiatorsreport\\_HESC2018.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/9387/National-Negotiators-Report/pdf/UCUBANHE32_National_negotiatorsreport_HESC2018.pdf), p. 23, last access 20/17/2018.



## **2. HEADS OF CLAIM**

- 1) A commitment and strategy to close the gender pay gap at the University of Reading by 2020.
- 2) Address and monitor the use of precarious contracts of employment through the establishment of a joint-forum.
- 3) A collective agreement to transfer precariously employed staff onto permanent contracts of employment.
- 4) Commitment to specific financial investment to support the creation of more secure contracts of employment across the University.
- 5) Commitment to review arrangements for the employment of sessional and hourly-paid members of staff.
- 6) Commitment to the principle of paying the “rate for the job” and ensuring equal pay for work of equal value across the University.

## **3. NEGOTIATING FORUM**

This claim concerns the pay, terms and conditions of academic and academic related staff. Reading UCU submit this claim to the Joint Negotiating Committee, which should act as the appropriate forum for negotiations around the demands attached to this pay claim. Reading UCU requests an extraordinary meeting of the JNC in Autumn Term 2018/19, as outlined in s4 of UCU’s recognition agreement, in order to:

- 1) Determine the pattern and format of negotiations relating to this pay claim.
- 2) Agree on the membership and terms of reference of any required JNC sub-committees.
- 3) Agree on a timeline in order to reach agreement on the pay claim elements by the end of the 2019 Summer term. UCU understand that a full academic year of concerted negotiations would provide sufficient time to ensure agreed actions/outcomes can be implemented at the start of the 2019/20 academic year.



#### 4. GENDER PAY GAP

In October 2015, a University of Reading working group on the Gender Pay Gap was established with a view to the pending requirement to publish reports. The report, based on data from 2016, shows a mean gender pay gap of 18.5% and a median gender pay gap of 21% at the University of Reading. Data published on gov.uk in April 2018 shows a persisting mean gender pay gap of 19.6% and median gender pay gap of 20.9% at the University of Reading in 2017.<sup>2</sup>

Most of the measures to address the gender pay gap recommended in the 2016 report have been delegated to the University of Reading's People Project, which took up work in 2017/18. Other measures have been put on hold subject to further consultation. It is not clear which further consultations have been undertaken, how work on the measures recommended by the 2016 report are integrated into the People Project, who is responsible for overseeing them or what the timeline is for completion of this work. There is a lack of responsibility and accountability for progress on the envisaged measures and a lack of a meaningful monitoring process to assess their effectiveness.

The University's action plan for the renewal of the Athena Swan Bronze award in 2016 included a commitment to reduce the gender pay gap for all grades across the institution to less than 5% by 2020. The University has also committed to increasing the proportion of female staff in management and leadership roles and in the professoriate.<sup>3</sup> However, it has not publicly committed to concrete actions in the short term to achieve these goals. Therefore, we assume that the gender pay gap will persist for years to come.

Reading UCU would consider the following suggestions, actions and commitments as pertinent to negotiations around closing the gender pay gap by 2020:

- a) Agree a joint statement in relation to the commitment of the University to close the gender pay gap by 2020.

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<sup>2</sup> GOV.UK Gender Pay Gap Service: <https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/viewing/employer-%2cBrxOmqQ0eFMSDkPTUbXddQ!!/report-2017>, last access 20/0/2018.

<sup>3</sup> University of Reading Staff News: <https://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/staffportal/news/articles/spsn-761079.aspx>, last access 20/07/2018.



- b) Provide the leadership across and within schools and to commit sufficient resources (people and money) to achieve this objective.
- c) Develop and agree a plan of action and assigning a timeline to undertaking these actions.
- d) Commitment to making additional payments to female members of staff should the gender pay gap still persist by the end of the 2019/20 academic year.
- e) Agree a process for regular reporting on progress with measures taken under the agreed action plan and to monitor the impact of these measures on reducing the gender pay gap.
- f) Arrange training to tackle cultural practices that mitigate against women.
- g) A review of current pay award practices and criteria for Grade 9 with the objective of implementing a transparent and jointly agreed award process and structure.
- h) Develop an action plan and timeline to achieve the University's target of 45% of either gender in senior leadership roles, of 40% female professors and of 30% women in all University committees and boards.
- i) University management to address the gender implications of differential rates paid across academic disciplines.
- j) Conduct a joint-review of all bonus pay, discretionary spine points and retention premia in order to identify the practices that lead to the gender pay gap in this area.
- k) Take the necessary steps to ensure bonus pay, the award of discretionary spine points and retention premia do not disadvantage women.
- l) Actively publicise how and when staff can be nominated, and what the criteria are for bonus pay/discretionary spine points.
- m) A review of workload and output expectations to ensure that staff with caring responsibilities as well as staff working part-time are not judged against and disadvantaged in comparison with staff that exceed expected workload and outputs when it comes to promotion.
- n) A review of whether there is a gendered pattern in allocating administrative roles for academic staff within Schools and of the implications of different administrative roles on career progression.



- o) Take measures to address identified gender imbalance in distinct working areas of the University.
- p) Targeted mentoring and development scheme to identify individuals suitable for promotion.
- q) Flexible working applications and outcomes to be monitored; this information should also form part of the annual equality report.
- r) A review of current part-time and flexible working practices, in particular the rates of progression and promotion for staff on flexible working arrangements as compared to staff not on such arrangements.
- s) Training for managers and leaders in relation to flexible working requests.
- t) A review of requests for parental leave made by men with a view on encouraging more men to take parental leave.
- u) A review of return to work from extended absences, such as maternity and paternity leave, and transitioning from flexible work arrangements to minimise disruption to an individual's roles and work projects.

## **COMMENTARY**

The most obvious differences in pay between male and female staff at the University exist within Grade 9. The evidence is that not only are there fewer women professors but that when women do break into the professoriate, they tend to be paid less than their male counterparts. The fact that an ethnicity pay gap also occurs most notably within Grade 9 highlights this as an area in which potentially discriminatory factors in recognising value and achievement are at work.

While both the data in the gender pay gap report approved in 2017 and in the report published in 2018 show that more women than men receive bonus payments, women's mean bonus pay was 18.7% lower, and women's median bonus pay was 40% lower than men's in 2017 according to data published via gov.uk.

While in particular the introduction of teaching intensive career pathways appears to have released a previous promotion blockage affecting women more than men, two issues persist: Firstly the number of female TI staff on Grade 6 and currently cut off



from career progression (see also section 7 below on this matter), and secondly, unequal representation of women within Grade 9.

The University should ensure that all employees can achieve a work-life balance. However, it is worth restating that this is especially important for women who are still statistically more likely to have child or other caring responsibilities.

#### **4. CASUALISATION/PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT**

Following a JNC meeting in February 2015, the University agreed to review the employment and rates of pay for hourly paid staff. Consultations began in spring 2015 and resulted in a report provided by Cathy Smith in October 2016 but there was no follow-up on the report until October 2017. A Working Group was established to review practices and recommend improvements to procedures and working conditions of hourly paid staff. The discussions of this Working Group have been constructive but to date no recommendations have been enacted in the workplace.

Reading UCU asks the University to commit to implementing a new framework for the employment of sessional staff undertaking academic duties by May 2019. Reading UCU would consider the following suggestions, actions and commitments as pertinent to negotiations to establish such a framework for casualised and precariously employed members of staff:

- a) Actively dissuade casualisation of academic staff and limit the use of sessional employment only to circumstances that meet pre-agreed criteria.
- b) Establish a collective agreement through which staff on hourly-paid contracts amounting to more than 0.1 FTE are transferred to fractional contracts of employment.
- c) Link rates of pay for sessional academic staff to the University pay scale.
- d) Eradicate the practice of the use of unpaid labour by committing to payment for all tasks & duties undertaken by sessional academic staff.
- e) Sessional staff will receive a contract and associate terms & conditions in advance of commencing work.



- f) Sessional staff will receive notification of their teaching schedules as early as possible in the Summer break for the coming academic year.
- g) Duration of all contracts will cover the period of time during which paid activities take place.
- h) Establish a joint forum to monitor and address the use of “non-permanent” contracts at the University of Reading.
- i) Active and regular fractionalisation of sessional and hourly-paid staff through the work of the joint-forum.
- j) Ensure equal access to incremental progression for sessional and hourly-paid staff.
- k) Ensure equal access to responsibilities and professional development opportunities for sessional and hourly-paid staff.

#### 4. RATE FOR THE JOB/“GRADE DRIFT”

“Grade drift” occurs when employers require higher level tasks to be undertaken by lower graded staff. It could also be referred to as undermining the ‘rate for the job’. This process can occur through custom and practice or as a result of particular processes or policies e.g. performance monitoring, promotion, casualisation.

There can be wholesale drift where it is clear that the duties are clearly more aligned with a higher graded post or it can be incremental, where only certain aspects of a role drift from a higher grade to a lower one. One example of where employees at the University are affected by this is the role of Grade 6 Teaching Fellow.

The University’s pay grades, when they were set up following the 2004 National Framework Agreement, were linked to Academic Role Profiles and the match between Grades and roles was set as in the following table:

|  | <b>New Local Grade</b> | <b>Spinal point</b> | <b>Academic</b> | <b>Research</b> | <b>AR (Academic Related)/OR (Other Related)</b> |
|--|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---|
|  |                        |                     |                 |                 |   |



|            |   |                                     |                 |                          |  |
|------------|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--|
| Academic 1 | 6 | <b>27-36</b>                        | /               | Research Assistant IB/IA | ALC (Admin Library Computer) 1/2 /OR 1/2 |
| Academic 2 | 7 | (34-36 probationary lect.)<br>37-44 | Lecturer        | Researcher II            | ALC 3/ALC 4 /OR 3/OR 4                   |
| Academic 3 | 8 | 45-49                               | Senior Lecturer | Researcher III           | ALC 5/OR 5                               |
| Academic 4 | 9 | 50 ...                              | Professor       |                          |  |

*Table 1: Academic, Research and Academic Related/Other Related roles, levels of responsibility and associated pay grades*

According to the above, teaching activity below Grade 7 was not envisaged. The employment of Teaching Intensive staff at Grade 6 raises two immediate issues:

- 1) Teaching Fellows at Grade 6 are not appropriately remunerated, since the duties they undertake and the levels of responsibility they have do not correspond with the Academic 1 profile according to the National Library of RPs;
- 2) Grade 6 Teaching Fellows are included as a TI role in the academic job family as set out in the University's role profiles, but cut off from the teaching intensive career progression route which has been established to enable TI career progression from Grade 7 to 8 and Grade 8 to 9.

After a number of occasions on which UCU raised the matter prior to 2016, the University informed UCU at the JNC on 31 October 2016 that a working group would be initiated to look into the uses of and progression opportunities of Grade 6 Teaching Fellows. At the JNC on 7 February 2017, UCU was informed that this working group would be chaired the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning and would take up work soon. UCU would not be involved in this working group. Since then, UCU has received no update on its progress. Schools received an information gathering email in February 2017 regarding responsibilities undertaken by Grade 6 Teaching Fellows. Two years since UCU persisted in raising this issue, no information has transpired as to how it is addressed by the University.





Reading UCU would consider the following suggestions, actions and commitments as pertinent to negotiations around addressing instances of grade drift:

- a) Moving current Grade 6 Teaching Fellows to Grade 7 (TI Lecturer) and discontinuing the employment of Grade 6 Teaching Fellows.
- b) Clarification of the link between levels of responsibility and pay grades, consistent with the NLRP and ensuring consistent practice across schools.
- c) Clarifying links between levels of responsibility involved in administrative and managerial duties undertaken by academic staff and the appropriate pay grades for such levels of responsibility.
- d) A review of practices within and across schools for allocating administrative and managerial responsibilities to academic staff in relation to their pay grades.
- e) Monitoring to ensure that academic staff are not undertaking duties regularly which are aligned to a higher pay grade.

